



November 8, 2010

Dear Kitchen Cabinet members,

It appears the majority party will remain the majority party for the upcoming legislative session. **However, as always, I pledge to work collaboratively with my colleagues across the aisle to find solutions that cut costs.** The current budget crisis presents our state with a great opportunity for Republicans and Democrats to work together focusing on programs that have evidence-based successes. Because the numbers are going to be much closer (most likely 22 Republicans and 27 Democrats), the Senate will be taking a much more balanced approach than in recent past.

Is this the first time you've read one of my e-mail updates? [Click here](#) to become part of my "Kitchen Cabinet" and receive these periodic newsletters.

Due to budget restrictions at the Legislature, I will no longer be able to send you printed newsletters about what goes on in state government. **Now, more than ever, it's imperative to sign up to get these electronic updates.**

## Call for a special session

Last week my colleagues, Senate Minority Leader Mike Hewitt and Senator Joe Zarelli, the ranking member on the Senate Ways and Means Committee, penned a [letter to the governor](#) asking her to call a one-day special session of the Legislature when members return to Olympia for Committee Assembly in early December. The letter read in part:

"We ask that you immediately call a meeting of the four legislative caucus leaders, who would likely bring along their budget leads, to begin working on policy changes to stop the bleeding in our state budget. Agreed upon budget savings would then be put into legislation for adoption by the full Legislature in early December, when we are already scheduled to be in Olympia for committee meetings. To ensure the most responsible use of our limited resources, this special session would ideally be limited to one day.

“The sooner the Legislature acts to address this crisis, the earlier we can achieve budget savings that will help protect our state’s most vulnerable citizens from even larger service cuts. As legislators, we have the flexibility to do what no one else can do: Make targeted reductions in spending, rather than employ the blunt instrument of across-the-board cuts. We can also enact changes in law that not only save money now, but result in compounded savings that will aid in addressing the deficit projected for the 2011-13 biennium.

“Waiting until January or later to shore up the 2009-11 budget will only make our fiscal situation worse and require even more and deeper cuts. Calling budget writers together now, followed by a short special legislative session in early December, is a responsible, pro-active approach to addressing our state’s budget crisis. We hope you will agree, and will immediately call caucus leaders together to begin negotiations.”

**I echo the urgency stated by my colleagues, and hope the governor acts on her publicly-stated interest in addressing this fiscal crisis earlier rather than later.**

## Prison reforms are still working

It’s been about 27 months since my 2007 prison and supervision reform legislation became law, and it’s still having a successful effect on Pierce County. **To date, we’ve received only 13 more offenders than we sent to prison over nearly three years.** That breaks down to about five per year. Compare that to the hundreds each year that we were being dumped into our neighborhoods in previous years and you can see how successful it’s been.

Today, of the thousands of felons being released from prison, 86% are going back to their county of origin. The 14% that aren’t are being exchanged between counties. We send some of ours to other counties (and vice versa) because of various circumstances written into the law, such as family location or proximity to harmful influences like gangs.

Snohomish County, which prior to my legislation was benefiting from the imbalance that was going on in Pierce County, is now receiving back from prison its fair share of released felons, plus an additional 15 over the 27 months due to the aforementioned relocation circumstances. In fact, our surrounding counties (with the exception of King) have all seen a slight increase in released felons



because of these exchanges, but I believe it's because economic realities are forcing families to move from rural counties into urban counties, not because of anything DOC is doing.

These prison and supervision reform laws have helped redistribute returning felons - more appropriately - back to their counties of origin, and it gives me a pretty good idea of how bad it used to be before there were any controls over felon placement. **And since the state is currently not supervising roughly two-thirds of all felons being released into our communities, it's extremely important that no county get saturated with more than its fair share of offenders.**

## Constitutional amendment to limit bail passes



Back in March, the Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 4220, which strikes a balance between public safety and constitutional rights, allowing limitations on bail for suspects considered dangerous. **Last Tuesday, the voters of Washington State approved the constitutional amendment by greater than 85% approval.**

This historic measure will for the first time allow the Legislature to push back against an overreaching Judiciary. It stipulates that the Legislature may determine the limitations on bail by providing judges with a set of criteria with which to make a determination of the appropriateness of bail. It also allows judges to deny bail to someone who has committed a crime that could result in life in prison if the individual has shown a history of violence that could endanger public safety.

## In closing...

If you know someone in our district who might be interested in receiving these updates, please feel free to forward this e-mail to him or her.

You can always find information online by visiting my website at

[www.SenateRepublicans.wa.gov/Carrell](http://www.SenateRepublicans.wa.gov/Carrell).

As always, if you'd like to contact me you can write, phone, e-mail, or stop by. My office phone number is (360) 786-7654, and my home phone



number is (253) 581-2859. Or you can write me at **102 Irv Newhouse Building, P.O. Box 40428, Olympia, WA 98504-0428.**

- Legislative E-mail address: [carrell.mike@leg.wa.gov](mailto:carrell.mike@leg.wa.gov)
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a small dot above the 'i'.

Mike Carrell

28<sup>th</sup> District State Senator